

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“The Border Security Challenge: Recent Developments and Legislative Proposals”**

May 22, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee hearing entitled “The Border Security Challenge: Recent Developments and Legislative Proposals”:

“Securing America’s borders is a significant challenge for our Nation. The unique features of our geographically-diverse land and maritime borders present a number of issues that cannot be solved with a ‘one-size-fits-all’ mentality.

We must recognize that securing our borders requires a multi-faceted approach. I am pleased to be a part of this morning’s hearing because I believe that the best way to develop effective border security proposals is by going through the legislative process and holding hearings where Members engage in informed discussion.

Everyone here today is united in their desire to address the challenges presented at our borders.

Our dedicated border security professionals need our support, because their service is critical to the security of our borders and the health of our economy. That is why this Congress provided \$14.8 billion for DHS’ border and immigration enforcement programs in the fiscal year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Funding included:

- \$1.225 billion for border infrastructure and fencing;
- \$570 million for additional helicopters and marine interdiction units;
- \$200 million to identify and begin removal proceedings for incarcerated aliens; and
- funding for an additional 4,500 detention beds and 3,000 Border Patrol agents.

Despite this unprecedented investment in border security, more remains to be done. I have long said that the Department needs a comprehensive strategy for border security. The current piecemeal approach is not the answer.

I look forward to a constructive discussion about how best to secure our Nation’s borders and to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop effective, common-sense border security solutions.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978